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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF

BOSTON HAVEN,

HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION

OF THE

Landed and Commercial Interest,

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE DRAINAGES

DEPENDENT ON THIS HAVEN,

AND TO THE

Corporation of Boston,

By WILLIAM CHAPMAN.

BOSTON:

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1800.

QUESTIONS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT

BOSTON, MASS.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN THE CONSTITUTION

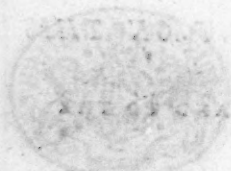
BY

LEWIS AND CLARENCE B. BROWN

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE BUREAU

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



COMMISSIONER OF THE BUREAU

WASHINGTON, D. C.

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

PRINTED BY

1877

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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
Improvement of Boston Haven.

IT must be highly gratifying, and particularly at a time like the present, to witness the efforts that are made to bring 40,000 acres of Fen land into a state of cultivation.

THAT this important work will go forward, in some shape, there is now no doubt, and well would it be were every interested individual master of the subject, for then it might be expected that that plan would be pursued which should promise the greatest advantages. But, viewing this subject, as far as I am able, in all its relations and dependencies, looking to the present and to future time, I cannot perceive that the GENERAL INTEREST is involved in the resolutions passed at Boston on the 13th. Instant.

I suspect the contrary: for, if it be of importance to preserve Boston Haven in a state as perfect as possible, the upland waters should be introduced into it *above* Maud Foster's Gowl, perhaps near to the Grand Sluice, by which means the channel would be improved in its whole course.

By Mr. Rennie's Reports it appeared that the proper drainage for the West and Wildmore Fens, and for the discharge of the upland waters would

be at Maud Foster's Gowt, that the same place would also afford a "*complete*" drainage for the East Fen and East Holland Towns, "*provided*" Boston Haven should be properly improved; but, otherwise, the best drainage would be at Hob Hole, near the mouth of the Haven. *

THAT an improvement so important to the Fens draining by the Witham, the Black Sluice, by Maud Foster's Gowt, and to the interests of the country in general, should not be overlooked, the Corporation of Boston obtained a plan and estimate from Mr. Rennie, upon which they voted, as did the Town, at a subsequent meeting, that they were ready to unite with the Country for the improvement of the river. As these resolutions carried no specific proposals, it seems to have been supposed † that the Town and Corporation

* For an account of the state of this Haven the Welland, and ourfall in general, see a Pamphlet entitled "Facts and Remarks, &c."

† Such a supposition was perhaps rather premature; and certainly the resolution to drain the East Fen by Hob Hole was in direct opposition to the repeated opinion of Mr. Rennie, who has, with great propriety, in every Report, urged the necessity of improving the Haven, and who, in his first Report on the Fens, p. 15. after speaking of the great saving to be made by draining the East Fen by Maud Foster, has added, "and I cannot help saying, that I think the money would be better bestowed in this way than by making the cut in question."

That, at the General meeting, the Town did not come forward with any specific proposals, will not appear extraordinary, when it is considered that Mr. Rennie's Report and Plans were but just received, that only two hours elapsed between the meeting of the Town and the General meeting, and that the whole of that time was occupied in examining the comparative merits of the modes pointed out.

were not inclined to contribute to the work, and therefore, after some discussion as to the propriety of making Wainfleet the outfall for the East Fen, it was resolved, that the upland waters should be conducted to Maud Foster's Gowt, but that the drainage for the sock and downfal of the East Fen should be near Fishtoft Gowt. Though this plan appears to militate against the interests of the general drainage, and probably against the best interests of the East Fen district, yet it is an important step towards the end in view, and as to drainage, perhaps the best that can be adopted so long as Boston Haven remains in an unimproved state. It is, however, much to be regretted that those who are interested in the present drainages should not see the advantages of an improved Haven; advantages of no little importance to the Town of Boston, but to the fens in general, and country adjacent, of immense magnitude.

As to the question By whom the expence of improving the Haven should be borne, it may be observed, that an increased supply of grain in the Boston market will make room for new Merchants to risk their capitals and exercise their skill, and some *may* find their money and their application turn to profitable account. The Ship-owner, by an improved haven, will witness fewer difficulties, and his vessels be less exposed to accident, yet, paradoxical as it may appear, *his* gains

may not increase. But widely different will be the effect produced on the country in general, and on that part in particular which, to produce corn, requires good drainage. The advantages of trade and commerce are but *contingent*; whilst they who may possess, and they who may cultivate the fens in a state of excellent drainage, will have the highest possible *certainty* of abundant gain. The Farmer, it should be remembered, is interested in lending his assistance to enable the Merchant not only to *export* grain as cheaply as possible, but that he may also *import*, with the greatest facility, and in the cheapest way, Timber Iron, Coals, Groceries, and the Thousand articles of which the country is always in need. Thus, from a good navigation, a twofold advantage arises to the *producer* and *consumer*, whilst the profits of the merchant and Ship-owner may, with an imperfect navigation, be as great, or greater, than with that which is attended with no difficulties. If this reasoning be supposed fallacious, let me, then, be told why it is that at Spalding and Wisbeach grain is always cheaper than it is at Boston. But if this be the case, if the imperfect state of Boston Haven be the bar to a good drainage, and to these *certain* advantages (and that it is, is evident, and has long been the complaint of the Witham and Black Sluice Commissioners), Why, I ask, should not an improvement of it be the first and foundation step, and why should not the greater part of the

cost attach to the greater certainty of profit. Can it be expected that the increase of profit to the trade and commerce of Boston, by the inclosure of the three fens, will equal the increase of advantages which the Landed Interest, the Farmer, and the daily Consumer of imported articles would experience by an improvement of Boston Haven, and, consequently, as Mr. Rennie has stated, the complete drainage of the fens? I answer NO. Viewing this question, as I trust I do, with an impartial eye, it appears to me that by an improvement of Boston Haven the Town would reap *some* advantages, the Country *many*. The inference, then, is, that, instead of each suspecting the other of *selfishness*, both should advert to the broad principle of general utility, the one come forward, perhaps with a *Toll*, the other with a *Tonnage*, for the improvement of this Haven, and thus render an important service to Agriculture and Commerce. Fully convinced of the wisdom of the proposed improvement, and the lasting benefits which would result from it, I would advise, and most readily accede to a liberal tonnage on Shipping, as would others, I know, who are engaged in the commerce of this port. Ere long it will be seen, I trust, that the country, the town, and corporation, will be prepared for union, and that to accomplish an improvement of such magnitude, it will not be found difficult to raise the trifling sum of £.41,270,

the sum which Mr. Rennie has supposed necessary to complete the work. Should this improvement, so essential to the future prosperity of the country, take place, should the upland waters be led to the Witham at the highest point possible, posterity would enjoy a well-drained country, and the port of Boston a good navigation. But, on the other hand, should the Haven remain uncontracted, should any of the waters which now pass through Boston be carried to Maud Foster, should a portion of those which now issue *there* be carried down to Hob Hole, and should not an equivalent quantity of upland waters be thrown into the Haven as high as the Grand Sluice, the drainage and navigation there and at the Black Sluice may be expected to be more impeded than at present, as the upper parts of the Haven would be more loaded with silt.



